

INFLUENCES ON GP DECISION MAKING FOR CHOICE OF CME SESSIONS IN PALLIATIVE CARE

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1) aim:

Most of palliative patients want to be taken care of at home by their general practitioner (GP) until the moment they die. GP's need to continuously educate themselves in order to be able to perform this task. We want to know the learning needs of GP's and the preferences and barriers they have towards continuing medical education (CME) in palliative care. We also want to know if organizers of CME share these insights and take them into account.

2) methods:

Focus groups are held of GP's and of organizers of CME separately (5 focus groups – 32 participants) Transcripts were analyzed by two researchers according to grounded theory methodology in NVIVO 8.

3) results:

GP's consider palliative care as part of their job. Their learning needs vary according to personal attitudes and to years of practice. They state that learning by collaborating with palliative specialists (home care teams) is the most effective way of acquiring basic competences. Specific CME sessions for special topics are of added value. Availability and accessibility when needed (in times of problematic patient care) is sometimes a problem. Small group sessions and peer review are major preferences.

Organizers are aware of the difficulties the GP's experience (high but satisfying burden of palliative care patients, practical difficulties of combining education with their daily practice). They feel that all GP's should have basic knowledge of palliative care (starting at undergraduate level) but not all GP's should be turned into palliative care specialists. Multidisciplinarity in education is a major item for organizers.

For both GP's and organizers, communication and teamwork are areas with the biggest learning needs.

4) conclusions:

Both groups share similar visions about palliative care education . Palliative home care teams are essential in supporting GP's in palliative care practice and in gathering experience.

Further research is needed to explore the ways palliative home care teams can be helped to educate general practitioners.

Type: education